

Biscailuz Tells Motorists How To Protect Cars From Thieves

By EUGENE BISCAILUZ Under-Sheriff, Los Angeles Co. Investigation shows that of the thousands of automobiles stolen in this county, the owners of the cars have themselves, in most cases, contributed negligence. Of those persons who have their cars stolen, nearly all invite theft by failing to take ordinary precautions.

In the campaign against crime and criminals, if we can fight from both ends toward the middle, so to speak, with our deputy sheriffs doing their work effectively on the one end and the public using ordinary precautions to make the work of criminals more hazardous on the other end, crime will be sandwiched between two mighty forces that will not give it breathing room.

Ordinary precautions do not aim to make the theft of an automobile or its accessories impossible, but they do serve to make it harder for thieves to steal, and often are sufficient to cause him to fail entirely to do so, or cause him to get caught in the act.

Some automobile owners take no precautions of any kind against theft. It is surprising that, with so many careless owners, there are not more automobiles stolen than there are.

License and Engine Numbers Hardly 1 percent of the people who report their cars stolen to the sheriff's office know the number of the engine or the state license. These two identification numbers are perhaps the most important means of identifying any car. It frequently takes days to get the correct license and motor numbers to the state office at Sacramento. This time and expense could be avoided if the owners used or-

inary precautions and jotted down the engine number and license number of their cars on memorandum pad, and put it where it would not get lost. In addition, if owners will place secret markings at several points on the car, identification can be made positive. A written notification of ownership hidden within the upholstery is very good.

Our statistics show that 83 cars out of every hundred stolen are taken by the thief within five minutes after the owner leaves his car. It is a practice of experienced automobile thieves to be on watch and to notice the car drive up and to take a good look at the occupant and watch him go away before attempting to steal a car. Experienced thieves are familiar with all makes of cars, and it is usually just as easy for them to drive off a Cadillac as a Ford. Consequently it takes very little time for them to jump into the driver's seat, turn the switch key, start the motor, and be off. The owner does not have to go very far or be gone very long to give the thief all the time he needs.

However, if the thief experiences trouble in starting the motor, he may do one of two things. If he is pretty sure the owner is going to be delayed and is not coming back right away to surprise him, he will investigate the cause of the trouble. If the thief is in doubt about the owner returning immediately, he will likely get out of the car and abandon the attempt to steal it. Thieves are lazy people and do not like work. Here is where the owner can take ordinary precaution—the ignition system of your car. The more difficult it is for the thief to start your motor, the less chance there

is of your car being stolen. **Ignition System Precautions** Most makes of cars have standard types of switch keys, and most thieves have a supply of these keys to unlock the switch of any car they attempt to steal. Under no conditions leave the switch key in the lock, but remember, the thief may have a duplicate key, so do not put too much confidence in your switch key alone. To render the ignition inoperative even when the thief has a duplicate key, you may find it a simple matter to raise the hood of your car and take off the top of the distributor box, if your car is so equipped. Inside the distributor box is a small roller which can be taken out very easily. The motor will not start if this is removed. This is a good precaution, especially if you intend to leave the car parked some time. Of course, experienced thieves are familiar with this precaution, but it serves to hamper their quick operations, especially if they do not see the owner remove the roller, as in that case the thief might be forced to take quite a little time discovering why the motor does not start.

Another means of rendering the motor inoperative is to have a secret switch hidden somewhere, perhaps behind the dashboard or under a seat, so as to cut off all power from the battery to the motor. Such a switch may give the thief no end of trouble trying to discover where it is located, and may prevent the theft of the car entirely.

Transmission Locks Many makes of cars are equipped with transmission locks. These locks are very good, but many people have them and never use them. It is just an ordinary precaution to get into the habit of locking the transmission every time you park your car. Do not think, just because you are going into a baker's for a loaf of bread and will have to be locked by a key from the outside. Also be doubly sure and lock the transmission if you have a car which was recently stolen under

just such circumstances. The owner had not been gone four minutes before it was taken.

Protecting Tires Probably more than one-half of the spare or extra tires being carried on automobiles in this county can be removed from the car by unscrewing two or three nuts. This condition is a standing invitation to thieves. In fact it encourages thieves to steal from you. It is just too easy to steal spare tires. That is why so many 14- and 15-year-old boys are able to do it. If every car owner took just ordinary precautions and bought three feet of heavy chain at about 10, to 20 cents a foot from a hardware store and padlocked this chain about the spare tire to some fixed part of the car, one-half of the spare tires in the county would stop. Use heavy chain—too heavy to be cut with snippers. Use a good, heavy padlock.

Also make a memorandum of the numbers on your tires and jot down the name of the manufacturer, the size and type of the tire. The sheriff's office has recovered hundreds of tires over a long period of time, and many owners have been absolutely unable to identify their property. The law prevents us from returning stolen property that has not been properly identified by the owners, and every year we are forced to sell at auction large quantities of recovered property which can not be properly identified.

Closed Cars A closed car provides many means to make it difficult for a thief to get the motor started, but many people are careless about using these means. If you own a closed car it is only taking ordinary precautions to elevate all the windows every time you park and lock all the doors on the inside except the driver's door, which usually has to be locked by a key from the outside. Also be doubly sure and lock the transmission if you have a transmission lock. Do this every

time you park. Get into the habit. Do not think you are going to too much trouble just to leave the car for a few minutes. Don't forget that 83 per cent of all stolen cars are taken within five minutes after the owners leave them.

Tire Locks Cars with small tires can not be conveniently driven off, under their own power at least, if locked with a heavy safety tire lock. Such locks have proved very effective in the past and their use is strongly recommended by insurance companies and the sheriff's office.

Theft Insurance Some people have an erroneous idea that it is not necessary to take ordinary precaution against theft of a car if they have it fully covered by insurance. Irrespective of how much insurance you carry, insurance companies seldom settle for more than 80 percent of the value of the car at the time it is stolen. You can overinsure, but do not think you will beat the insurance company by trickery. You can put it down as a fact that every stolen car means a loss of 20 percent or more to the owner, whether insurance is carried or not. Help to create a reduction in the number of cars stolen, and insurance rates will come down.

Auto Thefts and Major Crimes Statistics show that most major crimes are committed with a stolen automobile as an accessory to the crime. The average holdup man or burglar does not make the mistake of riding to or from the scene of his crime in his own automobile. He steals one for the purpose—one that is easy to steal. Hence it follows that every citizen who does not take ordinary precaution to prevent the theft of his car is indirectly guilty of creating conditions which help the holdup, the burglar, the murderer, and all types of lawlessness against society. Few automobile owners realize this.

Auto Thefts and Juvenile Crime More than half of the stolen cars are taken by juveniles—boys below the age of 21. In the beginning the

cars are merely taken for joy rides and abandoned. Soon, however, the practice of stripping the accessories of such abandoned cars is tried by the boys, and perhaps a life of crime starts from such beginnings. Boys steal only those cars which are easy to steal.

If you value your life, the lives of others; if you believe in law and order; if you believe in reducing all types of crime, take ordinary precaution against the theft of your automobile, for this one crime is responsible for many others of a more serious nature, and is the most prevalent of all crimes in Los Angeles County. Over 13,000 cars were reported stolen to the sheriff's office during the fiscal year of 1925-26.

LOCAL NOTES

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Billeck of San Pedro were Sunday dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Martin of Beacon street.

Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Powers and Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Beckham attended the West Coast Theatre in Long Beach Sunday evening.

Guests Saturday of Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Crittenden were Mrs. Edith Campbell and Miss Mary Campbell of Fullerton, friends of 30 years standing. Miss Campbell is librarian at Fullerton.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Eubank of George street were guests Monday of Mr. Eubank's parents and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Eubank Sr. and Mr. and Mrs. Snee of Long Beach.

Guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Walker of Narbonne avenue were Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Simms and Mr. and Mrs. Dyer, of Wilmington, and Frank Estedillo of Los Angeles.

Torrance Splits Double-Header With Comedians

Merchants and Radiant Comedy Nine Divide Honors on Sunday

Torrance Merchants stepped out in the first game of last Sunday's double-header, and swatted home 16 runs, while their opponents, the Radiant Comedy nine, garnered only one tally. Then in a short game of seven innings the Comedians won by a score of 1 to 0.

Next Sunday Torrance plays Redondo at Redondo. The Beach nine has won eight and lost two games, while Torrance has won seven and lost three. If Torrance beats the Beach outfit Sunday the two teams will be tied for first place.

Following is the batting average lineup of the Torrance team:

Player	AB.	H.	Pct.
Frenchie	2	1	.500
Hein	18	8	.444
Atwood	34	13	.382
Newby	37	12	.324
Weidner	41	13	.317
Wolf	10	3	.300
Parker	44	13	.295
Messal	11	3	.272
Anderson	4	1	.250
Olsen	17	4	.235
Casper	7	1	.143
Harlan	18	2	.111
McBride	24	2	.083

The scores of last Sunday's games follow:

Torrance	AB.	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Parker, 3b	5	2	2	3	0	0
Newby, lf	4	1	2	0	0	0
Atwood, 2b	4	2	1	1	2	0
Storti, ss	5	1	1	1	2	0
Weidner, c	3	1	1	0	0	0
Wolf, lb	2	3	1	0	0	0

Anderson, rf	4	1	1	2	1	0
George, cf	3	2	1	0	0	0
Hein, p	4	2	4	0	2	0
Total	34	16	13	21	9	0
Radiant—	AB.	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Due, lf	2	0	2	2	1	2
Davis, 2b	4	1	0	2	0	0
Rincher, c	2	0	0	2	0	0
O. Kolstad, lb	3	0	1	3	1	1
E. King, rf	3	0	2	2	0	0
Payne, p	3	0	1	0	1	0
S. Kolstad, cf	3	0	0	0	0	0
Post, 3b	2	0	1	2	3	0
Total	26	1	6	18	4	6

Torrance—	AB.	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Parker, 3b	3	0	0	2	2	1
Newby, lf	3	0	2	2	0	0
Atwood, 2b	3	0	0	3	1	0
Storti, ss	3	0	0	1	1	0
Weidner, c	3	0	0	4	1	0
Wolf, lb	3	0	0	5	0	0
George, cf	2	0	0	1	0	0
Frenchie, rf	2	0	1	3	0	0
Harlan, p	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	24	0	3	21	5	1

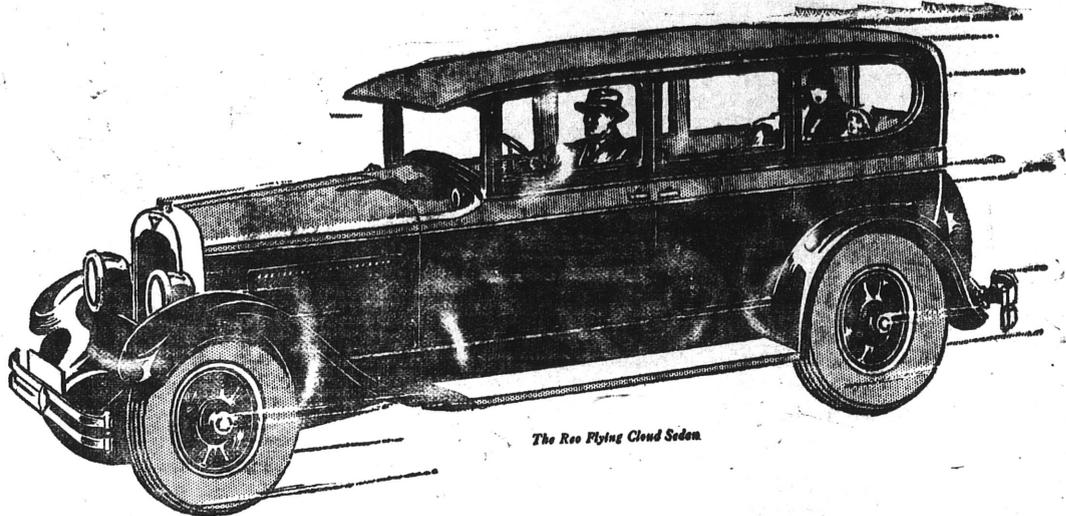
Radiant—	AB.	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Young, ss	2	0	0	0	2	0
Due, lf	4	0	1	0	0	0
Davis, ss	4	0	1	2	4	0
Rincher, c	4	0	2	3	0	0
O. Kolstad, lb	3	0	1	1	1	0
E. King, 2b	2	0	0	0	4	0
Payne, lf	3	0	1	3	0	0
S. Kolstad, cf	3	0	0	2	0	0
King, p	3	1	2	0	1	0
Total	32	1	8	21	12	0

Frank Merriam Will Speak Here To Kiwanis Club

Frank Merriam, former speaker of the California legislature, will address the Kiwanis Club of Torrance Friday noon at the Women's Clubhouse. Mr. Merriam will discuss public affairs from the standpoint of the average citizen. City officials have been invited to the luncheon.

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